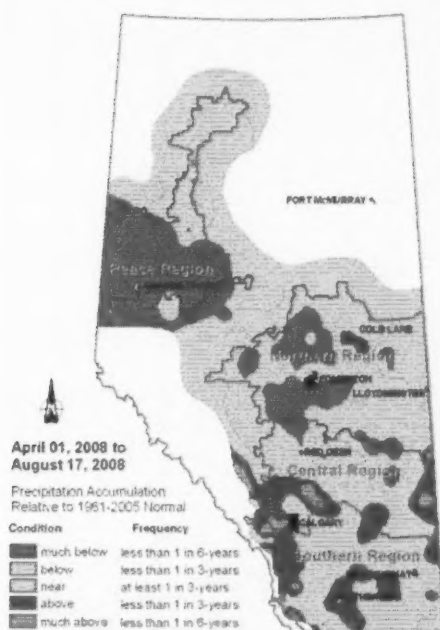


## Crop Conditions as of August 14, 2008

Weather conditions during the last two weeks have been mainly hot and dry, although rains have brought various amounts of moisture to the Red Deer area and many areas north of Highway 12 (including the Peace Region). The moisture received has been beneficial for crop filling, but is considered too late to significantly improve yield potentials. Crops in most areas of the province remain 7-10 days behind normal, although the recent hot, dry weather has hastened crop development. Harvest has just begun, mainly for winter cereals, dry peas and early-seeded barley in the Southern and Central Regions. For most crops in the province, harvest is still 2-3 weeks away. With respect to forage production, second cut haying operation, silage making and greenfeed baling are well underway.

Crop conditions and yield potentials vary considerably across the province. Most areas in the Southern Region expect to have above average yields, while yield potentials are well below average in areas along the B.C. border in the Peace Region. The recent hot, dry weather conditions have resulted in some deterioration in crop conditions and yield potentials. Provincially, spring wheat is rated as 12 per cent poor, 30 per cent fair, 50 per cent good, and eight per cent excellent, with similar ratings for barley and oats. Canola is reported as 14 per cent poor, 30 per cent fair, 48 per cent good, and eight per cent excellent. The rating of dry peas is 11 per cent poor, 28 per cent fair, 52 per cent good, and nine per cent excellent. Overall, yield potentials are estimated to be average for cereals and dry peas, and above average for oilseeds.



Due to lack of moisture, pasture and tame hay growth has been slow. The second cut haying operation is estimated at 15 per cent complete for hay grown on dryland, with below average yields. For hay under irrigation, the second cut is 35 per cent completed and yields are similar to long-term averages. Provincially, pasture condition is rated as 33 per cent poor, 35 per cent fair, 30 per cent good, and two per cent excellent. Some producers in the Peace Region have run out of pasture, and are feeding cattle with hay.

There are localized pest problems, mainly with lygus bugs, grasshoppers, and gophers. Other pests causing concern include root maggots, flea beetles, army cutworms, wireworms, and diamondback moths. Also reported are some crop diseases, including sclerotinia and clubroot in canola.

*Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, staff of AFSC and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre for their partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.*

## **REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:**

*The 2008 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:*

### **Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)**

- The weather conditions have been mainly hot and dry during the last two weeks. Many areas need rain to help crop filling. Crop development and maturity is about one week behind normal. Harvest has just begun and is estimated at 5-10 per cent complete for fall-seeded cereals and dry peas, and less than five per cent for barley and lentils. Overall, yields are expected to be average to above average for major crops and average for specialty crops under irrigation. The number of hail claims this year is much higher than in most years, mainly due to damage from hailstorms in July.
- The second cut haying operation is estimated at 40 per cent complete for hay under irrigation, but most producers do not expect to have second cut for hay grown on dryland. Pasture condition is reported as 16 per cent poor, 29 per cent fair, 47 per cent good, and eight per cent excellent.

### **Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)**

- The recent warm, dry weather conditions have hastened crop development. However, crops remain 7-10 days behind normal. In many areas, producers are concerned about dry conditions and rain is needed to help crop filling. Harvest has just begun and is estimated at 10 per cent complete for fall-seeded cereals, and one per cent for barley and dry peas. Yield potentials range from average for cereals to above average for canola.
- The first cut haying operation is virtually completed, and the second cut has begun in some western areas of the region. Due to lack of precipitation, pasture growth has been slow, and is reported as 13 per cent poor, 49 per cent fair and 38 per cent good.

### **Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)**

- Rain showers and hailstorms during the last two weeks have improved moisture conditions in the region, with some areas reporting crop damage from hail. Crop development is generally behind normal, with yields expected to be average to above average for major grains and oilseeds. Combining of fall-seeded crops has begun, with about five per cent in the bin.
- The second cut haying operation is about one-third completed. Pasture conditions are reported as 45 per cent poor, 45 per cent fair and 10 per cent good.

### **Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)**

- The weather conditions have been mainly warm and dry during the last two weeks. Crop conditions and yield potentials have deteriorated in most areas of the region. For areas receiving scattered rain showers in the last two weeks, the moisture has been beneficial for crop filling. Overall, crop yields this year are expected to be average for cereals and above average for canola. Some fall rye and dry peas are being swathed.
- Due to lack of moisture, hay and pasture growth has been slow, and is reported as 35 per cent poor, 27 per cent fair and 38 per cent good. Also, yields from second cut hay are below average.

### **Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)**

- Rain showers and thunderstorms have brought various amounts of moisture to many areas of the region during the last two weeks. The moisture has been beneficial for crop filling, but is too late to significantly improve yield potentials. In the central and southern areas of the region, crop conditions have been deteriorating, with crops maturing earlier than usual, due to stress from heat and lack of moisture. Crops along the B.C. border have suffered the most, while yield prospects remain promising for crops in the northern parts of the region. Overall, yields for major crops are expected to be significantly below average.
- Pasture and tame hay have also suffered from the hot, dry weather, and are mostly reported in poor condition. In some areas, producers have run out of pasture and are feeding cattle with hay. The first cut haying operation is virtually completed, and most producers do not expect to have a second cut.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development  
Economics and Competitiveness Division  
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August 19, 2008

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